



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Hoeven Proclaims Newborn Screening Awareness Month in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed September as Newborn Screening Awareness Month in North Dakota.

In North Dakota, newborn infants are screened for more than 40 disorders and conditions, including cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease and phenylketonuria (PKU). Some of the disorders are rare, and early identification and treatment are vital to the health of the baby.

“Newborn screening costs so little and yet can save so much,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D., with the North Dakota Department of Health. “For many babies, newborn screening can make the difference between a healthy life and one that is shortened or requires long-term care.”

Dr. Alan Kenien, a pediatric endocrinologist at MeritCare Health System in Fargo, N.D., is North Dakota’s medical consultant for babies with these rare conditions. “Most babies who have disorders look and act normal and seem perfectly healthy at birth,” Dr. Kenien said. “That’s why it’s so important to screen all babies. If disorders are detected and treated early, growth and development can occur normally.”

Chris and Sarah Hawley are North Dakota parents whose baby Amelia was identified with PKU at 6 days of age through newborn screening. Amelia was prescribed a special formula to drink to ensure her health. Today, her parents continue to monitor Amelia’s blood. Because of newborn screening and early treatment, Amelia is very active and developing normally.

During September, the North Dakota Department of Health is joining screening programs across the country in a special effort to reach out to expectant families to let them know what newborn

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screening is and what they can do to ensure that their newborn is screened comprehensively and successfully. Awareness and knowledge is key to helping affected children live normal, healthy lives, according to Barb Schweitzer, director of the Department of Health's Newborn Screening Program.

For more information about newborn screening, contact Barb Schweitzer, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4538 or bschweit@nd.gov, or visit www.ndhealth.gov/newbornscreening.

PROCLAMATION
NEWBORN SCREENING AWARENESS MONTH
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WHEREAS, according to the National Newborn Screening and Genetics Resource Center, one in 800 babies is born with a potential metabolic disorder; and

WHEREAS, most babies with disorders look and act normal and seem perfectly healthy at birth; and

WHEREAS, if disorders are detected and treated early, growth and development can occur normally; and

WHEREAS, the North Dakota Department of Health's Newborn Screening Program tests all infants for inherited disorders; and

WHEREAS, keeping babies healthy and promoting awareness of newborn screening disorders are important responsibilities for groups and organizations throughout our state; and

WHEREAS, through education and increased awareness, families can better understand the importance of these tests and how they can help to ensure their children grow up healthy.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim September 2009, **NEWBORN SCREENING AWARENESS MONTH** in the state of North Dakota.

John Hoeven
Governor

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